



Crape Myrtle Bark Scale- P.5

2020 - Quarter 2

Master Gardeners of North Alabama, Inc.

## From the President

Cyndi Lindblom (F13)

Hi Everyone. We are having a pretty confusing and busy pre-spring aren't we?

We had a great time at the Home & Garden Show, and we shared lots of information on Crape Myrtle Bark Scale (CMBS), as well as planting a garden of vegetables and flowers. The Madison Ready Fest was a success as well.



I was sad to see the state conference get cancelled but know it is in our best interest.

As you know by now, the HBG plant sale is cancelled, and our MGNA plant sale has been postponed.

Keep in mind that with Covid-19 we are having to be pretty flexible with our time and gatherings.

#### **MGNA Officers**

President: Cyndi Lindblom president at mginfo.org

Vice President: Jessica Thornburg vicepresident@mginfo.org

Treasurer: Kay Jacobson treasurer@mginfo.org Secretary: Carol Weand secretary@mginfo.org With the community distancing we are practicing, we should be spending lots of time in our own gardens weeding, prepping the soil, dividing our plants and other garden chores. I would say enjoy the sunshine, but I think that we will have to settle for enjoying the rain and working around the wet.

Hope to see you at the next MGNA meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Stay healthy!

Cyndi

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## **Reach for the Stars!**



Janet Boothe (W06)

Reach for The Stars is a program of tracking Master Gardener's volunteer hours and rewarding those members for the hours they have given to the community. During the February MGNA general meeting Bronze, Silver and Gold star pins were awarded. Advanced badges and star pins were announced at the general meeting, They will be awarded at a future meeting.



Cynthia Lindblom earned the honor of Top Hours of the year by posting 1,122 volunteer hours for 2019!



Cyndi Lindblom

Josie Asquith was honored with the MGNA Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award with a total of **7,651.4** volunteer hours since becoming a Master Gardener in 1984! Josie was submitted to the state level to vie for the AMGA Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award.

Special stars were awarded to:



Sue Khoury—Ruby Star Cookie Kruvand—Garnet Star Joan Jones—Rainbow Star Brenda Tapp—Rainbow Star





Josie Asquith

For a full list of stars and badges, see page **6.** 



**VOL. XXX, ISSUE 2** 

Editor Ann Tippie (W12)

#### **Contributing Editors**

Sue Khoury (W13) Brenda Tapp (W98) Carolyn Wade (W12)

The Garden Thymes newsletter is published quarterly: January/February/March, April/May/June, July/August/September and October/November/December. Editorial deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Master Gardeners of North Alabama was incorporated in 1988 and is now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

The Alabama Master Gardener program is conducted at the county level by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES).

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## Master Gardener Profile

## Carol Cook

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NASB)

Carol was born and raised in Poplar Bluff, a small town in southeast Missouri.

She is married to Hal Cook and has three married daughters. Shannon. Erin and Allison, and nine grandchildren

Carol earned a B.S. in Liberal Studies at Athens State University. She retired from SAIC Carol's favorite activity in 2014, after working for sev- spending time with her chilenteen years as a graphic dren and grandchildren. designer.

Carol master gardener in the fall of Carol and Hal travel with their invasiveness for the shear joy 2014.

After completing the master doing pH soil testing, and has continued to work on that committee ever since. She was first drawn to pH soil testing because it is an aspect of gardening that is quantifiable, when so many other aspects of gardening seemed so imprecise.



Carol Cook

Her hobbies include reading, became a certified hiking or anything outdoors.

oldest daughter and her family once or twice a year. One of her favorite trips was regardener class, she first vol- cently visiting Fallingwater, unteered with Peter Ashley the magnificent Frank Lloyd Wright house built on a



One of Carol's favorite flowers is the red geranium.

waterfall in Mill Run, Pennsylvania, with its accompanying 469 acres of lush landscaping, dominated by native rhododendron. Carol says the best trip of all was their recent road trip to Utah National Parks: Bryce, Arches, Canyonlands and Zion.

When asked about her favorite plants, Carol says loves to grow flowers and vegetables but in her earlier years was decidedly unsuccessful. She began to purchase plants that warned of of seeing lush growth. She did learn of the downside, though, after several seasons of pulling up mint, vinca, and lambs ear.

#### Editors note:

Carol has been helping at the HBG and MGNA plant sales since she became a master gardener. She is guick to lend a hand whenever needed.

## **Madison Readyfest**

**Tom Simpson (W12)** 

We had a good turn out at the Madison Readyfest on February 22. About 150 people stopped by our table. We gave out beads and made bracelets with the kids and had a great time.



Donna Phillips assists a child with a bracelet the Madison at Readyfest.

#### Give A Hand

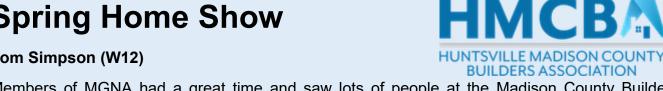
Stephanie Boyd (W19)

The following people went above and beyond and received the "Give A Hand Award" at our general meetings.

> January—Eugene Roberts February—Helen Carr March—Alice Brigman

## **Spring Home Show**

**Tom Simpson (W12)** 



Members of MGNA had a great time and saw lots of people at the Madison County Builders Association Spring Home Show at the VBC March 6-8. They gave out 400 flyers on Crape Myrtle Bark Scale (CMBS). Eugene Roberts did a great job on the composting demonstration. In all we reached out to more than 600 people .



Debi Bonkoski and Helen Carr greet people and answer questions at the home show.

#### Like! Us on Facebook

You don't have to be a member of Facebook to view the MGNA Facebook page. If you are a member, remember to Like Us, and share the articles that interest you!

www.Facebook.com/MGofNA



Brenda Swanner and Tom Simpson inform people about Crape Myrtle Bark Scale. (CMBS).

# There's a New "Bug" in Alabama Is it in Your Garden?

Brenda Tapp (W98)

Have you heard about the new bug that is in Madison County? This new bug (Crape Myrtle Bark Scale or CMBS), a non-native insect that attacks crape myrtles, was first identified in Texas in 2004 and has now been verified in multiple locations throughout the south. It was verified in Baldwin County in 2014, in Madison County in 2017, in Lauderdale County in 2019, and in Mobile County in 2020. It has also been reported, but not verified, in Cullman County. As the presence of CMBS became more and more evident, a group of MGNA members was prompted to form a task force with the primary goal of educating fellow citizens on how to identify CMBS as well as steps to take to prevent and control it. Along the way, a secondary focus has become mapping locations throughout Alabama where it has been verified.

CMBS typically lives and feeds on trunks, branches, and twigs but not on leaves of crape myrtles. It first appears as white or grey waxy crustations around pruning cuts and in the crotches of the trees. If you mash or prick one of these it will bleed pink or red. If left untreated it will cover most of the trunk and twigs of the tree. Nymphs produce honeydew, which results in black sooty mold covering branches, trunks, and leaves.

If you have crape myrtles in your yard (and don't we all?), check them carefully. Look for the black sooty mold covered with white scales. Crush one or more of the scales to see if it bleeds pink or red. Don't just look at the bottom of larger trees. CMBS may settle on upper branches first. If you plan to buy new crape myrtles this year, buy them from a reputable nursery and before purchase check them carefully for any signs of CMBS. Plant any new crape myrtles in full sun, and keep them healthy by properly mulching, watering, fertilizing and pruning.

If, despite your care, your trees become infested, what should you do? An effective, but extreme, solution is total removal. If this is your decision, remember that debris should not be placed at the curb. It should be burned or buried. Another more labor-intensive solution is scrubbing the affected trunks and limbs with a soapy solution. Chemical controls (soil drenches using imidacloprid OR dinotefuran) also have proven to be effective. However, these chemicals, which should only be applied in very early spring when the first leaves are appearing, are neonicotinoids, which may be harmful to pollinating insects so use them with caution.



Photo taken at Fun Factory by Sue Khoury



Photo taken in NE Huntsville by Brenda Swanner



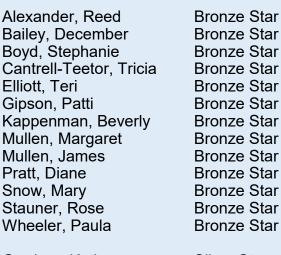
Close up of bark scale by Brenda Swanner

#### Note from the Editor

This is my first issue as editor of the Garden Thymes. I hope I can live up to the standards set by my predecessors.

#### Reach for the Stars (Continued)

Those receiving badges and stars:



Gardner, Kathy
Pangborn, Mayra
Schroetter, Ann
Stansky, Barbara
Studdard, Nareatha
Tully, Eileen
Weand, Carol
Silver Star
Silver Star
Silver Star



Carr, Connie	Gold Star
Cowart, Patty	Gold Star
Fletcher, Shireen	Gold Star
Lindblom, Walter	Gold Star
Thornburg, Jessica	Gold Star
Young, Ameree	Gold Star
Braman, Amber	Gold Badge
Moore, Acacia	Gold Badge
Parker, Susan	Gold Badge

Beckinger, Suzanne Platinum Badge Lindblom, Cynthia Platinum Badge

#### Master Gardeners Galaxy of Lights Night

Suzanne Beckinger (F07)

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 16 Master Gardeners came together armed with what else—food—on an especially *mild* evening to support the HBG by manning the ticket booths, directing traffic and keeping count of cars and \$\$\$ on Galaxy Night. We took turns welcoming the public to the HBG, wishing all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. December 14<sup>th</sup> was the HBG's busiest Galaxy night. We had so much fun, that we added another night, although not as busy, on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Thank you to all who participated.

## 2020 Lunch & Learn Workshops

**Connie Carr (F16)** 



Each February the MGNA Educa- sistant) and yellow shrimp plant tion Workshop committee hosts (which is best planted in containers weekly Lunch and Learns at Dublin on your deck, as the bunnies love Park in Madison. Topics presented it!). Other things to consider and are chosen from a list of requests mentioned by all three speakers: by previous workshop attendees.

Week #1: Planting for Pollinators presented by a team of our own Master Gardeners - Janet Boothe, Jennifer Johnson & Melissa Kirkindall. Janet is an apiarist (just a fancy name for beekeeper) and provided many interesting tidbits relating to honey and all kinds of stingy flying things. For instance, did you know that there are over 4,000 native bees in the US alone and 20.000 worldwide: that wasps are accidental pollinators; that honey changes color based on the color of the pollen collected by the bees; or that Goldenrod pollen makes a beehive smell like dirty socks? Jennifer, a lepidopterist (one who studies butterflies) offered up some valuable tips for attracting butterflies to your garden. Plant for all year: if you can offer food early in the spring, you are likely to become a destination garden. Butterflies love fruit trees, Passion Vine and lantana, and remember: you also need host plants, which may not have noticeable flowers, but provide a place for butterflies to lay their eggs. Moths make cocoons; butterflies make chrysalis'. Specific plants attract specific species. Melissa let us know that good attracters for hummingbirds have good color, not fragrance, as hummers can see for 1/4 mile! She also emphasized that early bloomers, like the Red Buckeye or viburnum will draw them to your yard. She suggested several other plants that have worked for her over the years: Natives coral honeysuckle & columbine, glossy Abelia (for nectar and cover), butterfly weed, phlox (mildew re-

sistant) and yellow shrimp plant (which is best planted in container on your deck, as the bunnies love it!). Other things to consider and mentioned by all three speakers: eliminate the use of pesticides in your garden; provide nectar and pollen year round; plant multiples in close groupings; use native plants whenever possible; include larva host plants (such as dill (Anethum graveolens), fennel (Foeniculum vulgare), or parsley (Petroselinum crispum), and include a variety of colors and shapes. Now, sit back and enjoy the view!





Melissa Kirkindall talking about

Week #2: **Birds, Bats & Bees** presented by **Daphne Moland**, a naturalist at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge

hummingbirds.

This Lunch and Learn was very informative listening to Daphne Moland from the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. She is a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable speaker. We learned about different birds, wildlife in the refuge, and about bats in our area. She wants to promote environmental awareness and stewardship in the surrounding community with interpretive presentations.



Daphne Moland

Week #3: Everything Tomatoes! presented by Dan Porch, Blount County Extension Agent and Alabama State Tomato expert.

Dan, just 12 days shy of retirement, gave a wonderful presentation full of tips for successful backyard tomato production. If you have enough sun in your yard (at least 6 -8 hours of FULL sun), you should be able to produce a good crop of tomatoes every year. Many of his tips are things you probably already know but bear repeating: Blossom end rot is usually caused by one of three things: soil is too wet, soil is too dry or soil does not have enough calcium. Do a soil test! It's a good idea to add lime every year, or at least every other year. Look for varieties that resist spotted wilt – Bella Rosa is his #1 recommended variety. You will probably have to order seeds and grow them yourself, as most local nurseries and big box stores get their plants from Bonnie Plants©, which doesn't grow his recommended varieties. Good qualities to look for when choosing varieties to grow are flavor, firmness and fruit Big fruit = fewer tomatoes. Small fruit = lots of tomatoes. You can plant as early as April 1st (be prepared to cover and protect from late season frost and wind) and as late as July 4th to get ripe fruit. Heirlooms vs Hybrids, not much difference if you treat your heirlooms with a fungicide regimen. Heirlooms are uglier. Other recommended varieties: Persimmon - a yellow variety; Momotaro - #1 in Japan; Mr. Stripey - high yield, smallish fruit; Rutgers & Celebrity – overall good quality. friendly Basicsand covers crops, insects, diseases, etc.

Continued on next page.

## 2020 Lunch and Learn Continued

developed at Auburn for the Alabama Cooperative Extension Sysuser insects, diseases, etc.



Dan Porch discussing tomatoes with Lorraine Herel (intern).

Week #4 - Seed Starting, Saving & Viability presented by Charlotte Haygood of the Sand Mountain Seedbank

The last Lunch and Learn in our series was held on March 3. Charlotte, and her friend, farmer Dove Stackhouse, co-founded the Sand Mountain Seedbank, which is based in Marshall County and maintain a collection of local Alabama heirloom seeds. Most gardeners nowadays transplant small seedlings into their gardens, so few folks really know how to plant seeds. We were told how and heard tips on producing seeds that are pure, containing all the genetic material of the parent plants. They discussed the importance of having the correct distance between various varieties to prevent cross pollinating and having a minimum number of plants for the best harvest of seeds. They also expressed the importance of ensuring all moisture is out of the seeds before storing them to prevent mold from destroying your efforts.

Lastly, Dan recommends all gar- To check the viability of old or deners download and use an app passed on seeds, you can do the germ" test by placing 10 seeds (never ALL your seeds at once!) between two wet paper towels to tem called "Farming Basics". It is see how many germinate. This will friendly and covers crops, give you an idea of how many will sprout once planted. The presenters brought with them a variety of saved heirloom seeds, which workshop participants were welcome to take, some needing to be harvested from stalks or pods. Perhaps those seeds will produce plants that will have viable seeds for future generations and those lucky enough to be in possession of them can say, "These plants are grandparents seeds my saved."



Charlotte Haygood



Heirloom seeds were available for participants.

## **Morris Update**

Carolyn Wade (W12)

Morris gardening groups are working hard and enjoying each garden day. Our 6th graders have researched pollinator gardens and decided what plants they would like to grow. They will build and plant their selections in a new pollinator garden next to the greenhouse. They have also been working hard on propagating plants for the school's plant sale in May. The 5th grade students have started seedlings - trying to decide which seeds to plant proved hard for some of the students. As one boy put it - so many great choices. They have compared white and brown eggs before making deviled eggs in baggies. Do you know what goat, yak or sheep cheese tastes like? The 5th graders found out recently in a cheese comparison class - they all liked the sheep cheese and we skipped the yak.

Note: Huntsville City Schools closed on March 16th due to the Covid-19 virus. At the time of this printing, they are closed for the rest of the school year. We had a great time with the kids this year and missed giving them a hug when class was over.

We can always use more volunteers. Please consider joining us in the fall.

Photos are of Gloria Uhl helping to start seeds, Jenene Castiglione helping plant seeds and Candy Trowbridge helping with the cheese tasting.







## 2020 MGNA Plant Sale

Ann Tippie (W12)

As you know, we have had to postpone our plant sale indefinitely. For now, we ask that you try to keep your plants ready for our sale even though it will be later than planned. There is no date set yet. If we have to go to an alternate fundraiser, we will have rummage items, some plants and a raffle. If you are an artisan or crafts person, please be thinking of something you could create and donate to sell.

Thank you,

2020 Plant Sale Co-Chairs, Alice, Ann, Brenda and Cyndi

## **DVG Update**

Carolyn Wade (W'12)

We have had one work day so far at the DVG due to all the rain: BUT on that day, we got a lot accomplished. We repaired a raised bed that had rotted sides and built a new bed out of landscape blocks to show another type of raised bed. Beds were weeded and peas were planted in two raised beds. We finished off the morning planting radishes, chard and lettuce seed tapes made by the 5th graders at Morris. If you would like to join us, send me an email to add your name to our day list. Right work now are working one morning a week, depending on weather. The photos are of Jim and Marge Mullen planting peas, and Dave Grey and Eugene Roberts working on a new raised bed.





# **Upcoming Events at the Farmers Market**

Ann Tippie (W12)

In May, we plan to have a container gardening class and have the participants make their own gardens to take home. Gloria Uhl will be on hand to talk about fairy gardens and everyone will be given the opportunity to add fairy garden objects to their container gardens.

In June, we are either painting stepping stones or making concrete leaves. Once again, Brenda Tapp will be leading the class.

Of course, our plans are contingent on what is happening with the Covid-19 Virus.

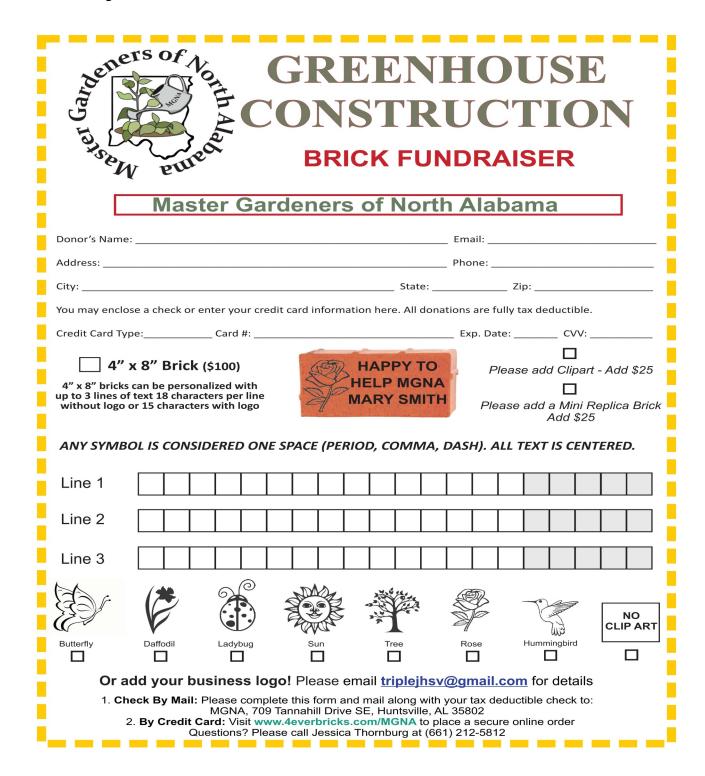
## **Buy a Brick**

Just a reminder that we're selling engraved bricks to raise money to buy a greenhouse that will be installed behind the Extension Office on Cook Ave. Please share this with your family, friends, employer, clubs, etc. The bricks will be installed around the greenhouse. The link to purchase a brick is: https://deverbricks.com/donors/MGNA/. All the detailed information is there.

The greenhouse will be used for many community horticultural education efforts for adults and children, as well as growing plants for our annual plant sale.

Questions? email me at triplejhsv@gmail.com

Jessica Thornburg, Greenhouse Chair



## 2020 Field Trips

Ameree Young (F13)

Month	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	Sept 2020	October 2020
Date(s)	TBA	June 13th	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Description	Jim Scott's garden is a private 7 acres on Lake Martin with trails and waterfalls, not handicapped accessible with much walking, approx. 3.5 hr drive, picnic lunch	Privately owned wildlife refuge, Site of a hobby model railroad club, and 8 -10 orchards of chestnut trees, It includes a train ride through the property, and a lecture by the owner of his conservation efforts to save the chestnut trees. Approx. 2.5 hr drive from HSV, picnic lunch	Hydro- ponic let- tuce farm	Dismals Canyon, a canyon that contains a diversity of trees & plant life with many waterfalls, natural bridges, cliffs, caverns, was occupied by several native American tribes, hiking trail is 1.5 miles, lunch at Rattlesnake Saloon, approx. 1.75 hr. from HSV	Duncan Family Farms, a local farm which grows 1,000s of acres of certified- organic produce such as baby greens, herbs and let- tuces	Jim Allen's Gar- den
Restrictions	MGs and spouses	TBA	MGs and spouses	none	TBA	TBA
Location	Dadeville, AL	Fredonia Mt, Dun- lap, TN	Arab, AL	Phil Campbell, AL	Gurley, Al	Decatur, AL
Time	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Cost	Free	Free	Free	\$12 adults	Free	Free
Contact person	Sandra Pape	Ameree Young	Mary Jane Reumann	Owen & Allyson Hofer	Cyndi Lindblom	Ameree Young
Popup gar- den tours TBA						

#### **Contact Information**

Sandra Pape: sandrapape@gmail.com, 256-466-8764

Ameree Young: amereeyoung@comcast.net, 256-683-5386 Mary Jane Reumann: reumann@aol.com, 256-509-4146

Allyson & Owen Hofer: allyson.d.hofer@gmail.com, 256-883-8497

Cyndi Lindblom: cyndi.lindblom@gmail.com, 256-880-8204

## Farmers Market "Make & Takes"

Ann Tippie (W12)

### Wine Bottle Wind Chimes—February 8





On February 8, Lorraine Herel (intern) lead the wine bottle wind chime make and take for 23 people. Lorraine started with a power point presentation she had prepared on blue glass. She came prepared with several wine bottle wind chime samples she had made and showed us how to use the bottle cutter.

Everyone had a great time.



#### Pressed Flowers—March 14



Nineteen people attended the class on pressed flowers at the Farmers Market, March 14. Brenda Tapp did an outstanding job of explaining the history and various techniques of flower pressing. She had her personal examples on display to show participants the many possibilities. Everyone had a great time exploring their creative side.







## Worms and Haybales Workshop





MGNA had an outstanding workshop on January 16, the first of the decade, at the Alabama A&M Center on Moores Mill Road presented by Allyson Shabel, an ACES Extension Agent. Allyson showed us how, why, and easy tricks to make a unique and successful hay bale garden. We also learned about vermicomposting, a very interesting method of composting in small spaces with the help of worms. She had an enthusiastic audience ready to try one or the other or both.





**Allyson Shabel** 

## 2020 Workshops

Connie Carr (F16)

Jennifer Johnson (W16)

#### Thursdays 10:00-12:00 (unless noted otherwise)

Huntsville Botanical Garden, 4747 Bob Wallace Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35805 ACES Madison County Extension Office, 819 Cook Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801 Hartlex Antique Gallery, 6515 University Drive, Huntsville, AL, 35806

Date & Time	Topic	Presenter	Location
June 4 4:00-6:00	Backyard Beekeeping, Homegrown Honey	Trace Barnett	HBG Arbor
Sept 17 10:00-12:00	Native & Inva- sive Plants	Anna Bright Soozi Pline	ACES
Oct 15 12 – 1:30 2:30 – 4:00	Fall Flower Arrangements	Leslie Chittam	Hartlex Antique Gallery
Nov 19 10:00-12:00	Planting Bulbs for Spring	Janet Boothe	ACES

## Calendar of Events

## **April**

#### April 6

12:00—2:00 p.m.

Board of Directors Meeting

Madison County Extension Office

## May

#### **May 11**

12:00—2:00 p.m.

**Board of Directors Meeting** 

Madison County Extension

Office

#### **May 14**

6:00 p.m.

**General Meeting** 

Murray Hall—HBG

### June

#### June 8

12:00—2:00 p.m.

**Board of Directors Meeting** 

Madison County Extension

Office

#### June 11

6:00 p.m.

**General Meeting** 

Murray Hall—HBG

See prior page for Workshop Schedule.

See page 12 for Field Trip Schedule.

More information and registration for workshops and webinars at

www.mginfo.org. and https://

ssl.acesag.auburn.edu/mgmanager/

calendar.php (requires login)

**DEADLINE FOR 3rd Qtr. ISSUE IS June 15, 2020** 



Master Gardeners of North Alabama Alabama Cooperative Extension System 819 Cook Ave. Huntsville, AL 35801

